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Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1883 (2009)

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of resolution 1883 (2009), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council on a quarterly basis on the fulfilment of the responsibilities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The present report is the third submitted pursuant to that resolution.

2. The report provides an update on United Nations activities in Iraq since the last report (S/2010/76), dated 8 February 2010, with a focus on the steps taken to implement resolution 1883 (2009). It presents a summary of key political developments during the period under review, as well as regional and international events concerning Iraq. The report provides an update on the activities of my Special Representative for Iraq, as well as operational and security matters.

II. Summary of key political and security developments in Iraq

A. National elections

3. The reporting period witnessed the holding of general elections for the Council of Representatives on 7 March 2010. UNAMI provided support to the Independent High Electoral Commission and the Government of Iraq throughout the process. The Commission certified 86 political entities and coalitions, which nominated more than 6,000 candidates to contest the 325 seats in the Council of Representatives. An estimated 12 million of the 18.9 million eligible voters, or approximately 62.4 per cent, turned out to cast their ballots.

4. Prior to the election, the composition of the Council of Representatives had been increased by law to 325 seats from 275. The electoral constituencies were based on the current governorate administrative boundaries and on an open list proportional representation electoral system. The allocation of seats under the electoral law was considered to be highly complex, accommodating four different minority groups (Christians, Shabak, Yazidi and Sabean), seats reserved for a national level constituency, and a constitutionally imposed women's quota of 25 per cent. UNAMI, with support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and others in the United Nations country

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team, worked successfully to ensure that Christians displaced in the days leading up to the 7 March elections were able to exercise their right to vote at special polling stations.

5. The election process was divided into three separate and parallel events, all of which were administered by the Independent High Electoral Commission with the support of UNAMI: the Commission implemented special needs voting for police and military personnel, detainees and hospitalized voters in Iraq on 4 March; out-of-country voting between 5 and 7 March for Iraqis residing in 16 countries and across 67 cities (Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Netherlands, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, United States, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); and the general election day for all Iraqi registered voters.

6. On polling day, 7 March, all but 10 of the 49,640 official polling stations opened across Iraq as scheduled at 0700 hours. The few remaining polling stations opened after materials arrived and correct voter lists were delivered. In the first three hours of polling there were approximately 40 explosions in Baghdad. Despite these attempts at intimidation by insurgent groups early on polling day, the overall environment in which the poll was conducted was relatively free of violence and without any major security incidents that affected the polling itself.

7. Reports were received that some voters encountered difficulties in locating their polling centres, but much less than in the election held in January 2009, thus indicating an improvement in the technical capacity of the Independent High Electoral Commission and the success of voter education campaigns. The polls closed as scheduled at 1700 hours and, for the first time, many Iraqi television channels broadcast the counts taking place.

8. Prominent religious, civil society and political figures encouraged the active participation of the Iraqi people in the electoral process. UNAMI, the international diplomatic community, international and national observers and monitors all welcomed the overall integrity and transparency of the electoral process, which was widely assessed as having been conducted according to international standards.

9. Civil society participation in the electoral processes was strong. The Independent High Electoral Commission accredited more than 114,500 domestic observers, 657 international observers and 476,366 political entity agents to observe the electoral process, including the polling, ballot count and tally. UNAMI deployed 13 poll-watch teams, which visited 38 locations in 11 governorates to watch the electoral process. A total of 35 international organizations or entities registered to observe the process, with over 492 national observer organizations being accredited. International observers were deployed throughout the country, engendering further confidence in the electoral process. The Independent High Electoral Commission also accredited members of the diplomatic community operating in Iraq to observe the process, including the European Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

10. On the eve of the special needs voting, the Accountability and Justice Commission provided the Independent High Electoral Commission with a list of candidates to be struck from the ballot. In that instance, the Electoral Commission did not remove the candidates, but the Accountability and Justice Commission appealed that decision with the Electoral Judicial Panel after the election. The

Accountability and Justice Commission also requested the disqualification of nine candidates whom the preliminary election results indicated had won seats. Following the announcement of the preliminary election results, the Accountability and Justice Commission transmitted to the Electoral Judicial Panel a further list of 52 candidates for disqualification. The effects of the candidate vetting and disqualification process, particularly in relation to the de-Baathification exercise (as opposed to the Electoral Commission's own candidate qualification process), remain to be fully assessed. Before the election, my Special Representative for Iraq called for greater transparency in relation to the de-Baathification process and the timely resolution of appeals. The United Nations has repeatedly stressed that the vetting of candidates needs to be transparent, non-discriminatory and in line with Iraqi law and international standards. It is particularly important that this process is not influenced or driven by political motivations.

11. On 26 March the Independent High Electoral Commission released the preliminary election results, which showed that the Al-Iraqiya bloc, headed by former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, led with 91 seats. Prime Minister Maliki's State of Law coalition ranked second with 89 seats, followed by Iraqi National Alliance with 71 seats. Kurdish representatives won a total of 57 seats, including 40 for the Kurdish Alliance.

12. Following the announcement of the results by the Independent High Electoral Commission, 335 appeals on the preliminary results were submitted to the Electoral Judicial Panel. The majority of those appeals were lodged either by individual candidates challenging their own vote count or were related to the replacement of male winners by female candidates in order to meet the constitutional female quota for the Parliament (set at 25 per cent).

13. Some political entities called for a manual recount in 4 of 18 provinces, including a request in Baghdad by the State of Law coalition, which stated that its own investigation had found manipulation of up to 750,000 votes. However, their call was rejected by Al-Iraqiya and other political blocs and parties. On 19 April, in determining the appeal lodged by the State of Law coalition, the Electoral Judicial Panel ordered a partial recount of all votes cast in Baghdad province, accounting for 68 seats in the Parliament. The partial recount process began on 3 May and continues. As at 10 May, over half of the votes had been recounted, with no major discrepancies or evidence of fraud found. On the same day, the Independent High Electoral Commission announced that it would shortly submit the names of 244 winners (from the total of 325 seats) in 17 governorates (all except those in Baghdad and some minority and national compensatory seats) to the Supreme Court for certification.

14. In parallel, on 25 March the Federal Supreme Court issued a non-binding opinion on a petition lodged by the State of Law coalition concerning the proper interpretation of article 76 of the Iraqi Constitution, which provides for the largest bloc in the Parliament to nominate the Prime Minister. In its opinion, the Federal Supreme Court stated that the "largest bloc", as stipulated in the Constitution, either refers to a list before the elections or to a coalition holding the largest number of parliamentary seats during the first session of the Council of Representatives. Once the election results are ratified by the Supreme Court, the new President will be elected with a required two-thirds majority of Parliament, and, in accordance with the Constitution, will subsequently ask the largest bloc in the Council of Representatives

to nominate the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister in turn must submit to, and receive, a vote of confidence by the Parliament within 30 days of appointment.

15. The major political blocs have extensively engaged in talks on forming alliances and on identifying a suitable candidate for Prime Minister. The process of forming the next Government is expected to take a considerable period of time. Initially, the process remained at an informal level, in part because of the focus on the recount and on further appeals before certification. On 4 May, the State of Law coalition and the Iraqi National Alliance announced that they would form a larger coalition that would give them a total of 160 seats in the new Parliament, three seats short of a majority. The two lists also announced that the negotiations between them on the procedures for nominating a Prime Minister will continue. My Special Representative met with leaders of the winning blocs in early May, including Mr. Maliki and Mr. Allawi, to urge the start of the government formation process in a cooperative and inclusive manner. He also offered the United Nations assistance in the process, if required by the parties.

16. After the election, a number of violent attacks were launched. On 4 April, several attacks on some embassies and neighbourhoods of Baghdad took place, followed on 23 April by a string of bomb attacks targeting residents in Sadr City. In the most serious security development since the elections, a series of attacks across Iraq on 10 May, including in the relatively calm areas of southern Iraq, left over 100 people killed and more wounded. Notwithstanding these attacks, the Iraqi security forces have demonstrated their increased capacity to assume greater security responsibilities, evidenced by their successful maintenance of security during the March elections.

B. Arab-Kurdish relations in northern Iraq

17. During the reporting period, the United States military began the implementation of a security plan for Kirkuk and other internally disputed areas based on joint action and coordination by a unit composed of the Iraqi Army, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Peshmerga and the Iraqi police. To date, the joint security action has resulted in the establishment of a network of checkpoints and joint patrols around various cities as well as the training of security personnel.

C. Regional developments

18. Iraq attended the summit of the League of Arab States in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on 27 and 28 March 2010. The meeting decided that the next summit would be held in Baghdad. During the reporting period, Iraqi officials visited a number of regional countries. Iraqi President Talabani travelled to the Islamic Republic of Iran with Vice-President Abdul-Mahdi for the Nowruz celebrations on 27 March. President Talabani also visited Saudi Arabia on 11 April and was accompanied by Kurdistan Regional Government President Barzani. On 27 April, Turkish Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Sinirlioglu met with Kurdistan Regional Government President Barzani in Erbil and extended an invitation for him to visit Turkey. Vice-President Abdul-Mahdi visited the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Kuwait and Jordan between 3 and 8 April. From 5 to 14 April, Iraqi Vice-President Al-Hashemi visited Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

19. On 27 April, Iraq announced the appointment of Mohammed Hassan Ismail al-Ghoum as Ambassador to Kuwait. This is Iraq's first ambassadorial appointment to Kuwait since the 1990 invasion. During the reporting period, Bahrain became the most recent nation to reopen its embassy in Baghdad.

20. I am also pleased to report on progress towards the finalization of a Kuwaiti grant to assist the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights to localize, identify and exhume human remains. It is hoped that the capacity-building project, administered by UNAMI and the United Nations Office for Project Services in support of the mandate of my High-level Coordinator on missing Kuwaiti persons and property, Gennady Tarasov, will further the momentum towards cooperation and build confidence between the two countries. My High-level Coordinator visited Kuwait during the reporting period from 15 to 19 March to meet with officials attending the meeting of the Technical Sub-Committee of the Tripartite Commission, where a positive atmosphere, as a result of practical Iraqi actions and a supportive Kuwaiti attitude, was reported. However, I regret to report that the Government of Iraq has yet to respond to repeated requests for the implementation of the final phase of the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Maintenance Project mandated by Security Council resolution 833 (1993).

D. International development

21. On 22 March, I circulated a letter from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to the Security Council confirming that IAEA had been receiving excellent cooperation from Iraq in the implementation of its comprehensive safeguards agreement, thus allowing IAEA to effectively and efficiently conduct its safeguard activities. The letter also notes that Iraq has been working closely with IAEA in providing training to responsible Iraqi officials and that Iraq is in the process of updating its national legislation relevant to the application of safeguards.

22. The Security Council meeting on the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 3 of resolution 1905 (2009) took place on 6 April, where the Council was briefed by the President of the Iraqi Committee of Financial Experts, Abdul Basit Turki Saeed, and United Nations Controller, Jan Yamamoto. Mr. Saeed raised three issues associated with the Government report: (i) the action plan and timeline for the transition to alternate arrangements for the Development Fund for Iraq; (ii) the settlement of claims and debts inherited from the previous regime; and (iii) the assessment of progress made in the administrative and financial control over the current Development Fund for Iraq. The Controller briefed the Council on the activities of the Fund and the International Advisory and Monitoring Board for Iraq, the legal issues and options to be considered to implement successor arrangements, and the assessment of progress of the Government of Iraq in preparing for the successor arrangements for the Fund. The Controller noted that once the Fund becomes fully nationally owned and controlled, privileges and immunities associated with the Fund will cease to exist unless otherwise decided by the Security Council.

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1. Objeto y contrato

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58. I urge in the strongest words against the Division commonly to Mosul beginning in January, resulted in the displacement of 200 families (1,140 people) to neighbouring areas. Under the leadership of my Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, the United Nations country team worked diligently with its partners and local authorities to ensure that humanitarian needs were met, providing necessary emergency assistance in the form of food and non-food items. It is encouraging that nearly two thirds of these families have now returned to their homes. Nonetheless, ongoing violence, deliberate attacks and humanitarian space constraints continue to undermine the protection of civilian populations, the human children and non-combatants. On 2 May, 11 persons, five children and two injured when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device and a roadside improvised explosive device exploded near a convoy of buses carrying Shiite pilgrims returning from Karbala to Al-Hamdaniyah. Al the east of Mosul city in Nineveh Governorate, in the University of Mosul. It is not clear who was behind the violence, but the incident has raised serious concern regarding the safety of persons in the community.

59. United Nations also have brought hardship to some communities in Iraq. In response to flooding in Diyala affecting 400 families, United Nations agencies and NGOs, in coordination with the Iraqi security forces and local authorities, provided emergency aid to the affected population. These events highlight the critical need for the ongoing support to the Government for Iraq on the creation of a disaster risk reduction framework.

60. The United Nations continues to support the Government of Iraq in its goal to assist Iraq in removing mines and unexploded ordnance by 2010, in accordance with the Ottawa Treaty. The United Nations continues to support the Government in the development of a national mine action strategy, while facilitating mine risk education reaching 150,000 Iraqis through key partners. I welcome the progress achieved so far. We team in Iraq will further accelerate efforts by providing prevention tools, awareness-raising and rehabilitation processes in support of the Government efforts to fully protect the civilians of Iraq from the legacy of past conflicts.

Human rights

61. The UNAMI Human Rights Office, with assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), continued to assist in building the capacity of both the Government of Iraq and civil society organizations to improve human rights. As previously reported, Iraq adopted in November 2008 a law establishing the Independent High Commission for Human Rights. UNAMI anticipates it will resume its technical assistance in the process to establish the Commission as soon as the newly elected Government has been formed.

62. The UNAMI Human Rights Office, in partnership with UNICEF, continued to strengthen the monitoring and reporting mechanism under Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009) and 1998 (2009), for grave violations of children's rights in armed conflict. From January to March, 73 reports of 205 named MOD staff were received. During that period, the verification rate of reported incidents increased from 12.6 per cent in January to 61.1 per cent, a marked improvement.

65. As a positive development, in late January, the Iraqi Presidency Council approved a new law, drafted with the support of the United Nations, on NGOs following several years of delay. The law is considered by most NGOs and the civil society community as preserving the independence and the integrity of NGOs in conducting their operations in Iraq.

66. In February the Universal Periodic Review Working Group, operating under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, reviewed Iraq's compliance with international human rights standards. The Working Group called upon the Government of Iraq to sign and ratify or accede to nine outstanding international human rights instruments, and to incorporate them into domestic legislation; declare a moratorium on the death penalty; comply with international standards relating to detention and imprisonment; and ensure transparency and accountability in election processes. Recommendations were also made to the Government of Iraq to introduce measures aimed at ensuring the empowerment, the equality and the access to justice of women in Iraq. The Government is currently examining these recommendations and will provide its response at the session of the Human Rights Council in June 2010.

67. In the context of the universal periodic review process, the Government of Iraq also made advance voluntary pledges to ratify or accede to three international human rights conventions and review its current reservations to previously ratified human rights covenants and conventions; to provide regular reports to United Nations human rights treaty bodies, to cooperate with special procedures of the Human Rights Council; to bring domestic legislation into line with international human rights standards; and to establish an independent national human rights institution. Throughout the universal periodic review process, UNAMI, with others in the United Nations country team, was active in building the capacity of the Government and members of civil society to fully participate in the universal periodic review process, as well as other treaty-based reporting mechanisms.

68. In line with article 45 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF supported officials from the Government of Iraq to undertake a course provided by the Arab Institute for Human Rights in Tunisia. With its now increased capacity, the Government of Iraq will submit a progress report on its implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in the fourth quarter of 2010.

69. While noting some improvement in the security situation in Iraq, including a reported reduction in the number of civilian deaths, and developments in the area of governance, UNAMI remains concerned about deficits in the administration of justice, the management of prisons and detention centres, violence against women, and lack of child protection mechanisms. Significant progress is still needed to ensure the rule of law and to systematically address the issue of impunity for past human rights violations.

70. UNAMI is concerned about the legality of safety of criminal convictions based on evidence obtained through confessions under duress, the Central Criminal Court of Iraq continued to hand down death sentences without due regard to international standards enshrined in article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Most recently, on 13 January, 11 persons were executed, bringing the total number of executions since June 2009 to over 122. This is despite evidence indicating systemic problems in the application of due process and fair trial

guarantees that fall short of international standards. Consequently, UNAMI and agencies in the United Nations country team have called upon the Government of Iraq to suspend application of the death penalty in line with the moratorium called for by the General Assembly, in its resolution 62/149.

51. UNAMI continued its monitoring of prisons and places of detention, complementing similar activities by the Ministry of Human Rights and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Both the Ministry of Human Rights and the Human Rights Committee of the Council of Representatives reported abuses in places of detention controlled by ministries other than the Ministry of Justice (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defence). Detention monitors report increasing difficulties with access to these places of detention, raising concerns about the safety of detainees held in such facilities.

52. In March, there were allegations from the Governor of Ninewa that detainees from that governorate were held in a prison facility in Baghdad, outside the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice, and were subjected to abuse and torture without due process. I note that the Government of Iraq has closed the facility. As with other cases in the past, the United Nations urges that these allegations be investigated and those responsible brought to justice.

53. UNAMI continues to monitor the situation in Camp Ashraf in Diyala Governorate. In recent months, Iraqi security forces have not made any further attempt to relocate members of the Peoples Mujahedin of Iran resident in the camp. Although no significant outbreaks of violence have occurred during the reporting period, distrust and tensions between both sides remained, with limited cooperation regarding access to services and supplies in the camp.

54. UNAMI, while reiterating the right of the Government of Iraq to exercise its authority over Camp Ashraf and the obligation of the camp's residents to fully respect the law and the authority of the Government of Iraq, has continued to advocate for the residents' unhindered access to goods and services of a humanitarian nature, as well as for their right to be protected from arbitrary mass displacement or forced repatriation against their will in violation of the universally accepted principle of non-refoulement. UNAMI remains committed to assisting both parties find an acceptable resolution to this problem.

Security, operational and logistic issues

Security

55. Hostile groups continued to demonstrate their determination and resolve by carrying out two significant bombing attacks in Baghdad during early April and a series of attacks across Iraq in early May causing hundreds of casualties. Al-Qaida in Iraq claimed responsibility for the attacks against embassies in Baghdad and residential targets in mainly Shi'a districts of the capital in early April. As a result of these attacks, a United Nations national staff member living outside Baghdad's International Zone, and her son, sadly lost their lives. The International Zone, and Baghdad International Airport where UNAMI has a permanent presence, are subject to occasional indirect fire attacks. The Al-Qaida group in Iraq has reportedly reiterated its intent to continue its campaign of violent activities against diplomatic corps, embassies and international organizations in Iraq.

56. The general security situation in Baghdad is assessed as fragile. Incident levels for most areas of the capital remained relatively stable throughout April. After a brief spike in reported incidents during the election period, levels throughout April subsided to those observed prior to 7 March. There was no major violence observed in Baghdad related to the announcement of the preliminary election results on 26 March. However, the targeting of Government of Iraq officials, senior officers of the Iraqi security forces, Awakening Council members and prominent citizens continue unabated.

57. In the north, incidents appear to have shifted into the outer districts of Mosul as a result of security operations in the city since the March elections. The Iraqi security forces remained the focus of Improvised Explosive Device attacks in Mosul in retaliatory attacks for past operations, as well as the recent "Ninewa Wall" security operation. Ongoing security operations in the city continued to suppress potential attacks, and it appears that they have contributed to a reduction in overall reported incidents. Still, a continuation of current activities is expected as Al-Qaida in Iraq and affiliated groups attempt to retain their remaining strongholds in the province.

58. Incidents in the north central regions of Iraq continue to revolve around Kirkuk. Tensions are still present but have taken the backstage since the elections. The Iraqi security forces remain the predominant target of attack in areas inside and surrounding Kirkuk City, thought to be due to their increased visibility as the United States Forces in Iraq (USF-I) continue their withdrawal. Increased security operations after March have restricted most of the usual armed opposition groups' movements and activities in these districts. Emerging from the elections, there is no clear indicator of how the security situation will unfold in Kirkuk; however, Arab-Kurd tensions over the ownership of the city are likely to remain after the new Iraqi Government has been named. In addition to the usual attacks on the Iraqi security forces in these provinces, there was an upsurge recorded in attacks on Awakening Council members as insurgents remain focused on targeting former compatriots who have sided with the Government.

59. The Iraqi security forces remained the target of violent attacks in Ramadi and Fallujah during the period, including a number of suicide attacks aimed at Iraqi police stations and civilians in the Ramadi City area.

60. Activity in southern Iraq has followed previously reported trends, with the majority of attacks occurring around Hilla in the north Babylon province. The targeting of civilians, Government officials, Iraqi security forces commanders and Awakening Council members constitutes the main focus of these attacks. Incident levels remain low in Basra.

Operations and logistics

61. During the reporting period, UNAMI successfully completed the technical evaluation for the architectural and engineering services for the design of the future United Nations integrated headquarters compound in Baghdad, in close coordination with the Department of Field Support, the Department of Safety and Security, the Department of Management and the Office of Legal Affairs. The contract has been signed and design work is progressing as stipulated in the contract.

62. In view of the planned drawdown of the USF-I forces and the inevitable reduction in their capacity to provide security and logistical support to UNAMI, the Mission, following guidance and advice of a United Nations Headquarters interdepartmental planning team, has started necessary actions to ensure that appropriate alternate arrangements will be put in place, including the deployment of additional United Nations air assets. Additional costs in this regard will be included in the budget submission for 2011. I would like to emphasize the critical importance of such support in order to safeguard the conditions for UNAMI and the United Nations country team to continue and expand their role in support of the Iraqi people. In the absence of increased resources, a reduction of presence on the ground would likely be necessary, assuming unchanged patterns of security.

IV. Observations

63. The national elections for the Council of Representatives were a testament of the Iraqi people's determination to exercise their democratic right to vote and elect a Government that will shape the country's future for the next four years. Millions across the country cast their ballots in an electoral process that was broadly participatory and inclusive. During the lead up to the polls, and the day of the voting, there were relatively few incidents of violence and voter turn out was strong. I commend the Independent High Electoral Commission for its work in organizing these elections in a professional manner and demonstrating its improved capacity to conduct elections on a nationwide scale. The Iraqi security forces also deserve credit for doing their utmost to provide a generally secure environment for the voting to take place.

64. I am pleased that the United Nations has been able to provide valuable technical assistance and expert advice to the Independent High Electoral Commission. As has been the case during the past three elections and a constitutional referendum in Iraq since 2003, the United Nations assisted in drafting key electoral legislation, developing Electoral Commission rules and regulations, and assisting in public outreach. I would also like to thank members of the diplomatic community operating in Iraq who observed the process, including the European Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Also, I commend the keen interest that Iraqi civil groups took in the conduct of the national election.

65. As noted, all election complaints that have been filed are being vetted by competent electoral and judicial bodies and the decision to conduct a recount in Baghdad was made via a legitimate legal process. UNAMI has been assisting the Independent High Electoral Commission in developing clear protocols and procedures to ensure that the recount is conducted in a transparent and efficient manner. Once the recount is completed, I would urge all political entities and their constituents to abide by the outcome. I also call on all concerned to remain patient and exercise restraint while the complaints and associated appeals processes are concluded and the electoral results are ratified by the Federal Supreme Court.

66. The coming months will be a critical period for Iraq as ongoing negotiations to form a new Government intensify. A long, drawn out Government formation process will not serve the interests of the Iraqi people. I therefore urge political leaders to move swiftly and work together in a spirit of national unity to build a cohesive and

inclusive Government and ensure that the transition is peaceful. These are the responsibilities that come with democracy and fall on all political entities, especially those that have won the largest number of seats. In order not to lose time, I would encourage all political blocs to conduct negotiations on the Government formation process in parallel with the finalization of the formal electoral process. In that regard, I welcome the call by the Presidential Council of Iraq, issued in a statement of 4 May, asking all Iraqi parties to accelerate the Government formation based on the results of the elections. I firmly believe that the Government formation must remain a sovereign and Iraqi-owned process and free of outside interference. The United Nations stands ready to assist if requested by the parties concerned.

67. Once the new Government is formed, it will have to deal with major challenges including national reconciliation, resolving outstanding Arab-Kurdish issues, the sharing of natural resources, constitutional issues, effective public administration, human rights, IDPs and refugees, and reconstruction and development. While UNAMI and the United Nations country team continue to assist in all these areas, ultimately, it will be the Iraqi people themselves who need to resolve these issues. The challenge is to consolidate the gains that have been made in recent years and not allow armed groups and other spoilers to exploit the situation.

68. Relations between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Government of Iraq continue to be a significant factor to political stability in the country. Leaving outstanding issues unresolved, including administrative boundaries, the control of oil resources, minority rights and other matters of mutual concerns, will impact negatively on the political and security situation in northern Iraq. It is therefore essential that there is continued support for efforts in promoting dialogue. In particular, recent talks held through the High-Level Task Force supported by UNAMI to facilitate cooperation in Ninewa Province are a positive step towards this goal. Such initiatives could also contribute to broader efforts to promote lasting national reconciliation.

69. The gradual shift to longer-term development continues, as reflected in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the Iraq Humanitarian Action Plan for 2010, to support sustainable recovery and development for vulnerable communities. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework document, signed on 11 May, demonstrates strong solidarity of the international community and the Government of Iraq in ensuring that the development priorities articulated in the document reflect a shared vision for human and economic development. I am confident that this people-centred agenda will be acceptable to the new government, and will serve to guide the international community, the United Nations and the Government during the implementation process. In the spirit of the Millennium Development Goals and the Paris Declaration, I believe that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, in harmony with the National Development Plan, will form an important platform for supporting Iraq's new vision for the future.

70. The UNDG Iraq Trust Fund window of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq will be entering its final months for allocation of funds. Discussions are continuing regarding a new funding mechanism, as well as the Government's initiative to develop the necessary framework for the establishment of a co-financing mechanism. I look forward to positive developments regarding both these resource

coordination modalities. I would also like to stress that, in order to support the development priorities identified in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and continuing humanitarian response programmes, the United Nations country team will inevitably require more resources from Member States.

71. Regional cooperation will also be essential for Iraq's long-term stability. I therefore urge the Government of Iraq and its neighbours to pursue the resolution of all contentious issues between them, including land and maritime issues and the safe return of refugees. I also encourage resolution of outstanding issues to enable normalization of Iraq's international status in accordance with resolution 1859 (2008). I am hopeful that Iraq will make a concerted effort to expeditiously fulfil its Chapter VII obligations, including those related to Kuwait. Such actions could help create a positive momentum in the Security Council when it reviews outstanding Chapter VII mandates on Iraq based on my report (S/2009/385) pursuant to paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 1859 (2008).

72. While the United Nations remains committed to implementing its mandate in accordance with resolution 1883 (2009), Iraq remains an extremely complex operating environment for the Organization. In this context, the safety and security of United Nations personnel has been and remains my chief concern. I am grateful to a number of Member States that continue to provide security and logistical support for the United Nations presence in Iraq.

73. In view of the planned drawdown of the United States Forces for Iraq, UNAMI is now looking ahead and considering alternative arrangements to ensure that its security and logistic requirements are met. In order to improve the United Nations operational capacity, a significant increase in resources from Member States will be essential if the United Nations is to maintain or increase its activities in Iraq.

74. I would like to thank my Special Representative, Ad Melkert, the UNAMI staff, both national and international, as well as the personnel of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, for their commitment and endeavours under challenging conditions to assist the people and Government of Iraq in rebuilding their nation.